Professor Helmut Krausnick's interpretation of how the destruction order affecting all Jews was transmitted to the Einsatzgruppen has been known for about three decades. He presented it as an expert witness in numerous trials held by the courts of the Federal Republic of Germany against former members of the Einsatzgruppen, Einsatzkommanclos, and Sonderkommandos.1 No objections were raised against it. Gradually, historians accepted his thesis, but they did so without critical analysis.2 However, the knowledge accumulated over a period of years by the investigations of the German prosecution authorities should have prompted historians, and therefore also Professor Krausnick, to apply the objective research standards demanded by historical scholarship to a reexamination of the prevailing interpretation. But for a long time nothing happened. Finally, inspired by my publication about the fate of Soviet POWS,3 Professor Krausnick undertook a reappraisal of his thesis; however, this reappraisal cannot be regarded as unconditional.4 In particular, he is not prepared to deal with my interpretation by utilizing all the data now available. It remains an open question whether this refusal is due to a lack of time or to a tendency, observed frequently among professional historians, toward "exclusive jurisdiction."

Since time and again in the past I have had to reply, verbally and in writing, to Professor Krausnick's counterarguments, which dealt only superficially-or not at all-with my specific arguments, it would be pointless to present another comprehensive discussion of my work. In this report I can only point to arguments I have published and presented elsewhere.5 Here I shall limit myself to an analysis of particular points raised by Professor Krausnick in his reply to my review.

At the outset I would like to make it clear that at no time have I argued that no Jews were shot at the beginning of the Russian campaign, as Professor Krausnick evidently intends to convey in his response to my review.6 But I have always emphasized that the victims were as a rule men, and always they were men of draft age. Although women, children, and old persons were also arrested during the raids, they were in general not killed immediately but segregated from the rest of the population and incarcerated for the time being; they were shot only between the end of July and the beginning of August 1941. It is precisely the verdict of the district court in Ulm against Bernhard Fischer-Schweder and others, cited again and again by Professor Krausnick as evidence for his thesis, that confirms this fact.7 See tables 1 and 2, which list the mass executions verified by the district court and recorded in the Ulm verdict (omitting only cases that could not be verified).

This compilation leaves no doubt that in the beginning essentially only men of draft age were shot (in some cases the draft age may have been assessed differently), and women, children, and the elderly were shot at a later date. Professor Krausnick, however, as he states in his response, still finds no confirmation of this. But only a superficial glance at the Ulm verdict justifies this conclusion, for the court deals with these two types of executions in two separate sections of the verdict: The first deals with the execution of men, and the second with that of woman, children, and the aged.8

The fact that the defendants in the Ulm proceedings cited the general order for the destruction of the Jews as the basis for their killing of Jewish men does not constitute proof. The Ulm court, which could not refute their testimonies, simply accepted the interpretation of its expert witness, Professor Helmut Krausnick, who confirmed

TABLE 1. Mass Executions Primarily of Men of Draft Age

Place	Date	Victims	Comments
Garsden	24 June 1941	201 Jews and communists, including 1 woman	Women and children arrested and housed elsewhere
Krottingen	24 June 1941	214 male Jews and communists	Same as above
Augustowo	Between 26 June and 10 July 1941	316 Jews including 10 women	Same as above
Krottingen	28 June 1941	63 male Jews and communists	
Sweksznie	End of June, start of July 1941	At least 20 male Jews	
Krottingen	End of June, start of July 1941	15 Jewish males	Women and children taken to the Prichmonti estate
Polangen	30 June 1941	111 Jewish males	Women, children, and the aged taken to the Prichmonti estate
Tauroggen	2 July 1941	133 male Jews and several communists	
Georgenburg	3 July 1941	317 male Jews and communists, 5 women, and also 2 or 3 children	2 women were communists; 3 women with 2 or 3 children were Jews who did not want to leave their husbands; remaining women, children and the aged taken to Schmalleningken/Georgenburg
Tauroggen	Between 3 and 10 July 1941	122 male Jews and communists	Women and children taken to Vitautastrabe
Wladislawa (Neustadt)	Between 4 and 10 July 1941	192 Jewish males	
Wirballen-Kirbatai	Between 11 and 18 June 1941	Approx.. 200 Jews and communists, including 6 to 8 women, presumably 1 to 2 children	
Krottingen	Same as Wirballen-Kirbatai	120 Jewish males	
Vervizeniai	July 1941	50 Jewish males	Women and children taken to the Treppkalnis estate
Wilkowischken	Between 16 July and end of July 1941	120 Jewish males	
Calvaria	August 1941	120 persons, including 36 male Jews, a few women, and 3 (?) girls about	

		12 years old	

that the order had been issued before or at the beginning of the Russian campaign.

Furthermore, at the time of the killings, the executions had been described as "cleansing operations" (Sduberungsaktionen) and had been justified as retaliation for resistance against the German troops after they occupied Soviet territory, for sniping, incendiarism, and the like.9 This interpretation allows for the certain conclusion that the killings were not carried out in response to a general destruction order, but instead to Heydrich's secret orders-liberally interpretedto eliminate "elements hostile to the Reich,"10 which he issued in conjunction with the "Decree on judicial jurisdiction in the Barbarossa Territory and on Special Measures of the Troops" (Gerichtsbarkeiterla~) of 14 May 1941.11 What Heydrich meant by "elements hostile to the Reich" can be seen from his letter of 2 July 1941 to the persons designated as Higher SS and Police Leaders (HSSPF) for

TABLE 2. Mass Executions of Mostly Women,

Place	**Date**	**Victims**	**Comments**
Georgenburg	End of July, start of August 1941	At least 100 Jewish women, children, and old people	Men already shot on 3 July 1941
Wirballen	July-August 1941	At least 200 Jewish women, children, and old people	Men shot some time earlier
Krottingen	Middle August 1941	At least 20 Jewish women, children	Men already shot end of June, start of July
Garsden	August-September 1941	At least 100 Jewish women, children	On 23 June arrested together with the men who were shot already on 24 June 1941
Heydekrug-Kolleschen	August-September 1941	At least 50 Jewish women, children, and old people	
Polangen	End of August, start of September 1941	At least 200 Jewish women, children	Men already shot on 30 June 1941
Batakai	End of August, start of September 1941	At least 500 Jewish women, children	Placed in the camp beforehand
Krottingen	September 1941	At least 120 Jewish women, children, and old people	Men already shot on 26 June 1941
Vervirzeniai	September 1941	At least 100 Jewish women, children	Men already shot in July 1941
Tauroggen	September 1941	At least 130 Jewish women, children	Men already shot at the beginning of July 1941

the Soviet areas.12 And if one takes the trouble to read the interrogations by the German prosecution authorities of members of Einsatzgruppe A and other units, one repeatedly encounters statements confirming that at the beginning of the Russian campaign there existed only orders for the execution of

"enemies of the Reich,"13 the "Judicial Jurisdiction Decree,"14 and the "Guidelines for the Treatment of Political Commissars" (the so-called Commissar Order).15

Professor Krausnick uses the well-known report of 15 October 1941 by Walther Stahlecker, chief of Einsatzgruppe A, as evidence for his thesis and points in particular to his remark that "it was to be expected from the outset that the Jewish problem in the Ostland would not be solved by means of pogroms only."16 From this he concludes that the general order for destruction applied from the beginning of the Russian campaign. However, if we read the entire report, we can conclude that with these words Stahlecker retrospectively evaluated the pogroms in light of the order of destruction, which had been issued after the pogroms but before he wrote his report. Any other explanation of Stahlecker's statement is unwarranted, since we have nothing to support such an interpretation.

Professor Krausnick's use of the Jager Report 17 in support of his thesis is also untenable. The Jdger Report clearly shows that, with the exclusion of those killed by the Lithuanians, in the beginning essentially only men were executed. The mass executions of men, women, and children did not begin prior to August 1941. Furthermore, Jager's comment that [2,5141 Jews were shot by Lithuanian partisans on his instruction and order, which Professor Krausnick cites to substantiate his thesis, is also not suitable to undermine my interpretation. Those killings were the result of instigated pogroms, and furthermore, the victims were only men.

Statements made by the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommando chiefs Dr. Walter Blume, Dr. Alfred Filbert, Dr. Otto Bradfisch, and Dr. Otto Ohlendorf are used by Professor Krausnick as additional arguments in favor of his belief that the destruction order had been issued before or at the start of the Russian campaign. But we must evaluate these testimonies with particular care, because the witnesses were themselves defendants and their evidence could have been designed to exculpate themselves. Again and again, I have argued concerning the evidence that only one thing mattered to most defendants when testifying in court: they wanted to prove that a general order for destruction existed from the beginning of the Russian campaign. Only thus could they claim superior orders for executions launched on their own initiative. Under the German penal code, this meant conviction as accomplice (Gehilfe) and not as perpetrator (Tater), and thus a sentence of no more than 15 years in prison instead of prison for life.18 If the destruction order had in fact existed from the beginning, the assertion by other defendants that it was issued only later-that is, at the end of July or in August 1941-would be absolutely absurd, because with such testimony these defendants did not exonerate but rather incriminated themselves. Thus the testimonies of Blume, Filbert, Bradfisch, and Ohlendorf cannot be regarded in isolation. They must be evaluated after consulting the complete testimonies of former members of their units as well as the orders issued at that time. If Professor Krausnick had made such an appraisal, he would have reached a different conclusion.

A case in point is Professor Krausnick's use of the verdict against Alfred Filbert concerning the disclosure of the general order of destruction.19 According to Professor Krausnick, who invokes the verdict, the order is supposed to have been announced to the chiefs of the Einsatzkommandos in Pretzsch, and Filbert is said to have disclosed it to his subordinates in Treuburg. But if we utilize the interrogations, we find that while Filbert did indeed testify that the destruction order was announced in Pretzsch, he also added that at first only men were executed. Only later did Arthur Nebe, chief of Einsatzgruppe B, order that women and children also be shot.20 Further, his subordinates testified that

immediately after the beginning of the Russian campaign Filbert informed them in Treuburg or some other town that "potential" enemies were to be executed; this they understood to include also able-bodied male Jews. Only later, after a few weeks, were they instructed to shoot all Jews-men, women, and children.21

Incidentally, it should be mentioned that Professor Krausnick cites only those interrogations of Einsatzkommando chiefs that appear to corroborate his thesis. From Walter Blume, for example, we have among others the interrogations of 19 December 1962, 3 March 1966, and 11 May 1971.22 With each successive interrogation, Blume distanced himself further from preceding testimony involving the disclosure of the general order for destruction. On 19 December 1962 he testified that Bruno Streckenbach transmitted the order to the Einsatzgruppen at their assembly point in Pretzsch, thus simply repeating what he had testified as a defendant in the Nuremberg Einsatzgruppen trial. On 3 March 1966 he testified that at a Berlin meeting of Einsatzkommando chiefs, prior to the Russian campaign, Heydrich declared that communist leaders and Eastern Jews (0stjudentum) must be liquidated. And on 11 May 1971, after his interrogators pointed out his previous inconsistencies, Blume testified that Streckenbach did not transmit the order; rather, the earlier testimony had been a defense maneuver instigated by Ohlendorf. In Berlin parameters of the overall objective (Rahmenbefehl) had been announced, but no specific instructions had been issued. This overall objective, however, which according to Blume read something like "the communists and the Jews as the representatives (Trager) of the communist system must be destroyed," cannot be regarded as the order for the destruction of the Jews. Statements like these appeared in every Nazi newspaper during the Russian campaign, but no one believed-at least at first-that they meant universal physical annihilation.

In this connection it is also interesting that Professor Krausnick cites Walter Blume in support of his thesis, although Blume also confirmed the existence of a defense strategy by Ohlendorf at Nuremberg, the influence Ohlendorf exerted on his fellow defendants, and the attempts of defense counsels to orient their clients toward "Ohlendorf's line." According to Professor Krausnick, the evidence does not support the existence of this Ohlendorf strategy, although it has been indisputably verified by pertinent documents as well as the testimonies of defendants, witnesses, and defense counsels. Thus Professor Krausnick considers Blume as credible, on the one hand, and as not credible, on the other, depending on how useful his particular testimony is for Krausnick's thesis.

Seen from the perspective of (subjective) usefulness, Professor Krausnick's method of working is, incidentally, also striking in another sense. If he encounters facts that contradict his own evidence, and is unable to rebut those facts, he discards his evidence and never mentions it again. Thus, for example, he formerly cited one of the many statements made by Dr. Martin Sandberger, chief of Einsatzkommando la, as evidence for his thesis.23 But then I cited excerpts from the testimony of Erwin Schulz, chief of Einsatzkommando 5, showing beyond doubt that while interned in the Zuffenhausen camp shortly before his trial at Nuremberg, Sandberger still denied the disclosure of the destruction order prior to the Russian campaign and that he confirmed an early announcement of the order only in Nuremberg under the influence of Ohlendorf.24 Now Professor Krausnick no longer refers to Sandberger.

Concerning Ohlenclorf's credibility, it should be noted that today Professor Krausnick is probably the only one who still regards his statements on the disclosure of the general destruction order as the truth.

We now possess convincing evidence that reveals how Ohlendorf maneuvered to persuade the Nuremberg court that the general destruction order was issued prior to the Russian campaign. Ohlendorf lied when deception was useful, and he spoke the truth when honesty was profitable. Thus his testimony about the number of victims killed by his Einsatzgruppe had to be the truth, because at that time he assumed that he would become a "crown witness" at Nuremberg. But his utilization by the Allied prosecution would have been unlikely if they discovered on the basis of surviving situation reports that Ohlendorf had lied. His testimony on the date of the destruction order, however, could not be refuted, since no corresponding written order existed.

It is pure speculation to judge Dr. Otto Rasch as not believable. His self- incrimination by denying that a general destruction order was issued prior to the invasion of the Soviet Union in and of itself speaks for his credibility. His testimony was clearly confirmed by members of his Einsatzgruppe. Gtinther Herrmann, the chief of Einsatzkommando 4b, also substantiates it, even if Professor Krausnick holds a different opinion. Professor Krausnick would have known about Herrmann's corroboration if he had utilized all of Herrmann's interrogations. On 20 April 1971 Herrmann was interrogated during the pretrial investigation in the case against Streckenbach and was specifically asked about the date the order was issued. He testified as follows:

> Only on the day after the capture of Lemberg-this was as far as I remember in the first days of July-[Rasch] conveyed to me alone the Hthrer Order cancelling the application of military justice (Kriegsgericlitsbarkeit) [sic] and subjecting the enemy to the harshest treatment; that is, saboteurs, [communist] functionaries, and the representatives of Bolshevism, who also comprised the Jews, were to be shot. At that time, I understood this to apply only to male members of the respective groups. . . . [Raschl explained only later- and I am unable to say today where and when he did so-that also women and children of the above-named groups were to be shot.25

It remains an open question which order Rasch disclosed to Herrmann in Lemberg. Under no circumstances was it the general order for the destruction of the Jews. By the way, his statements were essentially confirmed by members of his unit.

It would be an error to conclude-as does Professor Krausnickthat Rasch lacked credibility because he claimed not to have been present at various places. Witness testimonies prove that Rasch frequently went on official trips.26 And if he supposedly claimed not to have gone to one town or another, or not to remember having been there, then we must take into consideration that the operational area of the Einsatzgruppe under his command was large; and we therefore cannot rule out the possibility that he forgot having visited a particular place. Further, Rasch was already very ill during the interrogations by the Allied prosecution, and the court found him too ill to stand trial at the beginning of the Einsatzgruppen case. And above all, his fellow defendants feared that "it would be a catastrophe" if Rasch testified,27 thus attesting to the credibility of his testimony on the timing of the destruction order. But wisely enough, Professor Krausnick does not challenge this incontestable fact.

Finally, the execution of about 7,000 Jews in Lemberg at the beginning of July also does not prove the existence of a general order for destruction at the beginning of the Russian campaign. Aside from the fact that only men were killed, the execution was justified as retaliation for the murder of several German soldiers by the Poles and thousands of Ukrainians by the Russians. It is indisputable that

German soldiers and Ukrainians were killed by Poles and Russians, respectively, prior to the occupation. Jewish citizens were probably selected as expiatory victims when the order for reprisals was issued simply because they had already been rounded up by Ukrainians, who detained and mistreated them.28 By the way, an expert like Professor Krausnick certainly knows that in the occupied Eastern territories Jewish citizens were for obvious reasons frequently singled out as targets for such reprisals.29

It can ultimately remain an open question whether the reference to the "solution of the Jewish Question" ("has already been initiated") in the Situation Report of 25 August 1941 refers to measures taken by the Romanians or by Einsatzgruppe D. For it is certain, as numerous witnesses have testified, that the general destruction order reached the units of Einsatzgruppe D only in August 1941 30 although prior to that time an order did exist to shoot so-called potential enemies, such as "commissars, prominent Jews, communist functionaries, saboteurs, etc."31 Quite a few staff members of the Einsatzgruppen and members of Einsatzkommandos reported that Himmler appeared in Nikolaev, before or after one of the mass executions, but after the general order to exterminate had been issued, to ask for their understanding for these harsh measures which, however, "would have to be intensified."32

Concerning who transmitted the general destruction order to the Einsatzgruppen, it should be pointed out in conclusion that not only the testimony of Bruno Streckenbach, who cited his exchange with Friedrich Jeckeln,33 but also other interrogations show that it was the Higher SS and Police Leaders who transmitted the order.34 Furthermore, it is striking that Himmler was in the occupied Eastern territories at approximately the time the order was probably issued, and it cannot be ruled out that he delivered the "Fuhrer Order" then and there.35 After all, extermination orders involving Jews traveled as a rule, as I have always pointed out, the route of special commands from the Reich Leader SS to the Higher SS and Police Leaders.36 Professor Krausnick, however, does not note this.

Having said all this, I see no reason to retreat from my position that the general order for the destruction of the Jews was issued to the Einsatzgruppen about August 1941.

At the beginning of the Russian campaign, there existed only directives for the instigation of pogroms and for the execution of "elements hostile to the Reich," as enumerated by Heydrich in his communication of 2 July 1941 to the Higher SS and Police Leaders. In the context of these "cleansing operations"- as the measures were called at that time-frequently able-bodied male Jews were also executed as "representatives of the Bolshevist system"; and various pretexts such as retaliation were often used to justify these executions. It cannot be denied-and witnesses report this, too-that in particular instances one or the other Einsatzkommando chief also ordered women and children shot. Thus, for example, in an Ukrainian village HSSPF Jeckeln noted the lack of accommodations for military staff with the words "but we still have the Jews," and ordered the shooting of all Jewish men, women, and children by Police Regiment Russia-South so that quarters became available. "Retaliation" was later listed as the reason for the killings.37 A similar case from the beginning of July 1941 occurred in Romanian territory, where Heinz Seetzen, chief of Sonderkommando 10a, ordered the shooting of 600 to 800 Jews of both sexes. At that time such an operation still shocked the military and even various members of the Einsatzkommandos. To pacify opinion, the operation was justified as a

measure in retaliation for the assault on several German soldiers, although no one knew of the assault.38

The killing of all Jews on orders started only in August 1941, after Heydrich had been instructed by G6ring on 31 July 1941 to launch the preparations required for the "final solution of the Jewish Question." This is supported not only by documents but also by numerous interrogations of defendants and by hundreds of testimonies from former members of Einsatzkommandos or Sonderkommandos.

Of course, to reach this conclusion, one must follow the scientific method required by careful scholarship. In summation, permit me to recapitulate. One must utilize and analyze all the available data about the Einsatzgruppen. Documents, interrogations of defendants, and testimony by witnesses cannot be examined in isolation; they must be seen in relation to each other. Even if assertions by defendants are cited in court decisions, they should not always be utilized as if they were established facts, because courts unable to refute such assertions must accept them under the legal maxim "When in doubt, then in favor of the defendant." And it goes without saying that documents and testimonies, or parts thereof, should be mentioned even when they contradict one's own interpretation. As I have demonstrated in this reply, Professor Krausnick has not always applied such research methodology. A few more examples will illustrate my position.

The situation reports show that in the first weeks of the Russian campaign essentially only men were shot, and not until August 1941 were women and children shot. A study of the files produced by the judicial proceedings against former members of the Einsatzgruppen would lead to the same conclusion, because these for the most part testified that the general order of destruction was issued in August 1941 with the justification that women and children must be killed "so as not to nurture avengers." Professor Krausnick ignores these findings. In his response to my review, he often invokes the Ulm verdict to cite the testimony of Stahlecker, chief of Einsatzgruppe A, concerning his involvement in killing operations at the beginning. This testimony, however, was not given by Stahlecker himself but represents claims by defendants about Stahlecker that could not be refuted by the court and therefore had to be accepted as givens. Professor Krausnick overlooks this fact and, in turn, accepts the testimony as the truth.

The testimony of Karl Jager, chief of Einsatzkommando 3, has been cited to prove that the destruction order had been issued at the beginning of the Russian campaign. But it is contradictory, and to interpret it, other findings must be consulted, especially the testimony of numerous former members of Jager's Einsatzkommando. Professor Krausnick did not refer to other sources but instead attempted an interpretation based solely on Jager's account. Aside from the fact that there was only one interrogation of Jager after his arrest (he committed suicide thereafter),39 Professor Krausnick cites Jager's self-protective arguments only when they support his thesis. His selectiveness is particularly evident in the pse of pogroms staged by Lithuanian partisans and the Lithuanian police respectively, which had indeed been instigated on orders. Professor Krausnick, however, argues that Jager would have had to prevent those pogroms if no general order to kill all Jews had existed. But there is a difference between pogroms and a general destruction order, and here we might ask what Professor Krausnick thinks pogroms mean.

It is also impossible to conclude from the assertions made by Sturmbannfiihrer Karl Tschierschky, former head of the SD department of Einsatzgruppe A, who assumed that the liquidation order applied

right from the beginning to all Jews, that the general order for destruction was issued prior to the Russian campaign. At the beginning of his interrogation, Tschierschky pointed out explicitly that "there was no mention of any liquidation measures [that is, during the talks held in Berlin or at the Einsatzgruppen assembly point in Pretzsch], and he himself had first heard of them after the start of operations in Russia, namely in Riga."40 The mere assumption by Tschierschky that the order existed from the beginning is therefore pure speculation. Furthermore, his subsequent testimony on the liquidation measures in Riga does not indicate that they were carried out by Germans and, should this have been the case, that women and children were also shot in addition to men. Moreover, in July 1941 the Latvian members of the antisernitic organization Perkonkrust, the selfprotective association Aizsargi, and the auxiliary security police under Viktor Arajs went on their murderous rampages in Riga. Is it possible that Professor Krausnick is not familiar with the relevant proceedings, particularly against Arajs? Incidentally, the Hamburg indictment against Arajs contains the following conclusion: "In the summer of 1941 exclusively male Jews were shot; there were only a few women here and there among the political prisoners. Female Jews were only killed from (about) autumn 1941 on."41

It is incomprehensible and deplorable that despite all these findings historians have adopted Professor Krausnick's thesis uncritically. Even today, after the publication of my critique, some of those who accepted Professor Krausnick's interpretation without criticism still seem unwilling critically to reexamine his thesis.42 They are of the opinion that the question concerning the disclosure of the general destruction order is a question of detail that does not matter. It is certain, they argue, that an order to kill all Jews did exist and that many people were killed under such orders.43 I cannot share this view; it contradicts the task of historical scholarship, which demands that we attempt as complete an explanation of the past as the sources permit.